

POEMS.

—BY—

BLANCHE ELMORE.

Born Blind.

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(THIRD SERIES.)



LOVE'S MESSENGER.

LAST night, through my open casement,
There entered a snow-white dove ;
He bore in his beak a message
Straight from the heart of my love.
O'er mountain, moor, and forest,
And high o'er the tossing sea,
On pinions which never wearied
It came from my love to me.

And the words so sweet and tender
Seemed to bring my darling near,
And the ocean that divides us
Seemed to slowly disappear ;
And I look for one brief moment
In those truthful, soul-lit eyes,
Where the love shines steadfast ever,
Like the stars in yonder skies.

Oh ! messenger, pray thee hasten
 Away to my lady's bower,
 For I know she waits thy coming,
 And counts every passing hour ;
 And when you shall nestle safely
 At rest near that gentle heart,
 Then tell her of all the passion
 That my words could ne'er impart.

And bear to my love this rosebud,
 Its language her heart will know,
 For Cupid kissed it in passing,
 And whispered his secret low,
 Deep in the heart of its petals,
 That the flower might them repeat,
 And impart to her the message
 Of true love tender and sweet.

Tell her,—ah ! what can I tell her
 That my darling does not know ?—
 That my faith can never falter
 Till the waters cease to flow.
 And e'en when life is over,
 There amid the spirit land,
 I shall be first to welcome
 And clasp her little hand.

BOAT - SONG.

OVER the sparkling waters,
While the moon is shining bright,
Gaily our little boat glides on,
Dancing the buoyant waves upon,
While our hearts grow glad and light.

Oh ! what is half so cheering
On a perfect summer's night,
As music made by dipping oars,
Timed to the song of joyous rowers,
As they pull with strength and might ?

Away ! Away ! On we go,
While the stars look from above,
While faintly from the distant shore
The city's chimes come stealing o'er
The waters like songs of love.

Row ! row ! while the fading land
Like a mist in the distance gleams.
Row ! while stretches on every side
A vast expanse of waters wide,
Where the pale moon sheds her beams.

Row ! row ! till the tender trail
Of dawn in the east appears ;
Then, when the stars burn dim and low,
And morn awakes with mystic glow,
We merrily homeward steer.

THE SEASONS.

SWEET is the breath of spring.
 Then robins love to sing,
 Joyous the woodlands ring,
 Nature is glad ;
 Wild flowers the path bestrew,
 Pleasant and fresh to view,
 All things are born anew,
 No hearts are sad.

Down in the mossy dell,
 Where lovers fond vows tell,
 Violet and sweet bluebell
 Bloom at your feet.
 Nature with tenderness
 Some scene of loveliness
 Paints in each recess :
 All is complete.

Fair is the summer-time,
 When drooping roses climb ;
 Then does the spreading vine
 Lend grateful shade.
 Low through the forest trees
 Whispers the gentle breeze,
 Coming from southern seas
 Over the glade.

Clover and new-mown hay
 Thick in the meadows lay,
 While gladly on its way
 Ripples the stream.

Out in the drowsy air
 Only the insects stir ;
 Beauty is everywhere,
 Fair as a dream.

Joyous the hunter's call
 Rings in the merry Fall,
 Thrilling the hearts of all
 With new delight ;
 Colors of rainbow hue
 Dazzle the wondering view,
 Heather is blooming, too,
 Purple and white.

Now from the beeches high
 Peep forth the squirrels shy,
 Southward the swallows fly
 Far o'er the seas.
 Crisp is the morning air,
 Making the pulses stir,
 Stripping the branches bare
 Of the tall trees.

Winter again is here.
 Old is the passing year,
 All in the woods is drear,
 Silence is there.
 Old earth is hid from sight,
 Wrapped in a mantle white,
 Yet here is new delight,
 Which we may share.

For with a fairy hand
 Jack Frost throughout the land,
 Nature doth now command,
 Bidding him go;
 And with his magic art
 Beauties undreamed impart,
 Which should delight the heart,
 Making it glow.



LIFE AND DEATH.

Two envoys came from the Holy Land
 To this world of sin and strife;
 One carried aloft the scythe of death,
 While one bore the staff of life.
 And each set forth at the dawn of day,
 On his sacred mission bent;
 And Hope and Despair walked side by side
 Wherever the enemy went.

While he who carried the power of death
 Was greeted with fear and dread,
 The one who came with the gift of life
 New joy at his coming shed.
 And wonder entered the angel's heart
 That they who were burdened with care
 Should not rejoice when the message came
 To enter heaven's portals fair.

“The cry that reaches the mercy seat
 Is ever for rest,” quoth he;

“ Yet I, who bring them eternal peace,
 They pray they may not see.
 I smooth the furrows from tired brows,
 Bring peace to the weary heart,
 Yet all would have me pass them by,
 And rejoice when I depart.”

The other spoke with a tender smile :
 “ Ah, brother ! ’tis ever so ;
 For life is dear to the heart of man
 On this dear old earth below.
 What matter though care may overshadow,
 Hope never ceases to smile :
 And never was known a heart that lives
 That must sorrow all the while.

“ And to linger near to those they love,
 To cling to a friendly hand,
 Gives greater comfort to sons of men
 Than thoughts of the Promised Land.
 In times of trouble they call for Death,
 When his steps are far away ;
 But if his shadow be drawing nigh,
 For Life they long and pray.

“ So long as the sons of men shall be
 Will Life be a welcome boon,
 And Death be counted a spectre grim
 That shadows their homes with gloom.
 But few can think of the after-life
 With the cruel grave in sight ;
 They fear to cross the river alone,
 To enter the shades of night.”

THE MESSAGE OF THE SUNBEAM.

IN through a narrow grating
 Of a dreary prison cell,
 A ray of God's own sunlight
 Like a tender blessing fell ;
 And one, whose life was darkened
 And shadowed by sin and shame,
 Gazed on that tiny sunbeam,
 Till his heart grew glad again.

Was it a gleam of mercy
 Straight from the gates of heaven,
 Bringing the welcome message—
 “ Thy sins shall be forgiven ? ”
 Only the Father knoweth ;
 But the angels rejoiced that day
 O'er one who came to ponder,
 Led by that tiny ray.

In through a lattice casement
 A shimmering sunbeam crept,
 And lingered o'er the cradle
 As a tiny infant slept.
 The mother, softly singing,
 Looked up from her work and smiled :
 “ The sunbeam brings a message
 From the angels to my child ! ”

The bright rays formed a halo
 O'er the babe's unconscious head,
 And o'er the snowy pillow
 A golden glory shed ;

And to the watching mother
 'Twas as though that fond caress
 Came from the hand of Jesus,
 Breathing love and tenderness.

In through the open doorway
 Of a stately palace hall
 There came a wandering sunbeam,
 And its radiance chanced to fall
 Over a mighty monarch,
 Whose brow was clouded with care,
 Which many a thread of silver
 Had sown in his raven hair

“ Welcome ! O fleeting sunbeam !
 The message of hope you bring
 Banishes dark foreboding,
 And cheers the heart of a king.”
 Thus spake the haughty monarch,
 As the sunbeam passed away,
 Leaving a light behind it
 That lived for many a day.

So many were the blessings
 The wandering sunbeam brought,
 So many were the lessons
 Unto weary hearts it taught.
 The mighty and the lowly
 Were glad with one accord,
 For a promise bright and holy
 On the sunbeam came from God.

And men whose souls were weary
 With endless toil and strife,

Who find but little pleasure
 In the busy race for life,
 Felt earth held naught so precious,
 Or could chase their care away,
 As did the welcome glimmer
 Of the sunbeam's tender ray.



FAREWELL, MY NATIVE LAND!

FAREWELL, dear land, upon whose sea-washed shore
 The silver moonbeams kiss the coral strand;
 My feet may wander by thy cliffs no more,
 Or listen to the ocean's anthems grand.

No more I'll stand upon the mountain's height,
 To watch the fleeing shadows haste away;
 When trembles in the east the first faint light
 Which ushers in the breaking dawn of day.

No more I hearken to the cuckoo's call,
 Or watch the skylark soaring high above,
 Filling the air with rich melodious strains,
 Piercing the clouds with thrilling notes of love.

No more, when lilacs bloom in joyous May,
 I'll gather of its blossoms pure and white;
 Or when the woodland paths are cold and grey,
 Shall I be near to mark the swallow's flight.

No more shall I behold the tiny cot
 Where trailing roses climbed anent the door.

To me 'twill ever be a hallowed spot,
 Though oceans may divide us evermore.

'Twas there that first my spirit had its birth,
 There as a happy child I learned to know
 Each flower that springeth on the green old earth;
 The voice of Nature, tender, sweet and low.

Farewell, dear land! 'Tis through a mist of tears
 I watch thee vanish slowly from my sight.
 While o'er thy cliffs the Queen of Night appears,
 And bathes thy distant shores in glorious light.

Though many joys the future holds in store,
 While memory lasts I never can forget
 The towering hills that guard my native shore,
 Or cease to picture them with fond regret.



MABEL'S VISION.

I DREAMED we stood together 'lone,
 Upon a drear and lonely shore,
 And gazed upon the ocean wide
 Far o'er the restless flowing tide,
 And listened to the breakers roar.

A heaviness was in the air,
 I shuddered, though I knew not why.
 When of a sudden overhead
 An awful darkness seemed to spread
 And hide from me the bright, blue sky.

I reached my hand forth in the gloom,
 But all around was empty space ;
 I called upon thy name in vain,
 No answering voice replied again,
 And swift the darkness grew apace.

My limbs seemed rooted to the spot,
 I tried to move but could not stir,
 Some unseen power seemed forcing me
 To gaze upon the troubled sea,
 'Till all my sight became a blur.

Then from amid the watery waste,
 Full suddenly I saw appear
 A face so full of calm and rest,
 That as it came, borne on the crest,
 My heart grew cold with nameless fear.

Ah ! then I knew the face was thine,
 And strove to stretch a hand to save ;
 Though almost at my feet you laid,
 You would not see my proffered aid,
 And you were washed back by the wave.

I woke to find it but a dream,
 Yet, still, there flits before my sight,
 Whene'er I close my wearied eyes,
 That face, those dark and dreary skies,
 Distinct as on that fearful night.

AN OLD DIARY.

TENDERLY touch the volume,
 Glance not with careless eye
 Over its pages, blotted with tears,
 Faded and dimmed by the passing years,
 Telling of struggles with pain and strife,
 The brave despair of a broken life,
 Of grief that could never die.

Only the old, old story,
 The tale so often told :
 A life's devotion bestowed in vain,
 A heart thrown back on itself again,
 A glimpse of happiness all too brief,
 A lifetime of sorrow, care and grief,
 Does the written page unfold.

Read, how the love endeavors
 To shield its idol yet.
 Though the old sweet trust has passed away,
 The god thus worshipped has proved but clay,
 She finds excuse for the cruel hand
 Which closed the door of hope's fairyland
 With never a fond regret.

Mingle your galling teardrops
 With those of long ago,
 Ere we lay the dim old volume by.
 Let a tender thought, a passing sigh
 For a life which little joy had known,
 A heart which for years had dwelt alone—
 Alone with its silent woe.

LIFE'S JOURNEYINGS.

Our lives are like two tiny barks
Out on the tossing sea,
Straining to reach that other shore,
Where all life's troubles shall be o'er
And faith our star shall be.

And many are the cruel rocks
Out in that ocean wide ;
And many are the hiddeem shoals
Which tempt our poor unwary souls,
And turn our course aside.

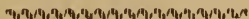
Some bravely breast its cruel waves
And nobly hold their way,
Till, just within the sight of land
They founder on the cruel strand,
And there, forgotten, lay.

Yet others steer a shorter course,
In hopes to gain the shore ;
But scarcely has their voyage begun,
When down their snowy sails are run—
They sink to rise no more.

And many in their journeyings
Forget the goal they seek,
And steer for every sunny isle
Which bright with promise seems to smile,
When all around is bleak.

But these soon weary of their joys,
 And once again embark ;
 And now with more experience
 And better armor of defence,
 They sail Life's waters dark.

And yet to those who reach the land
 How great is their reward ;
 There scenes of peace and holy ealm ;
 They find for every wound a balm,
 Near to the Throne of God.



MY VIOLIN.

My fingers draw the pliant bow
 Over thy silent strings,
 And from thy heart a thrilling note
 Of tender pathos springs.
 It floats in cadence sweet and low,
 Forth on the trembling air ;
 It fills my soul with longings vague,
 And all my pulses stir.

Strange voices from another world,
 With rapture in their tone,
 Seem with my spirit to commune
 Of joys to earth unknown.
 And as that soft, caressing tone
 Rises and falls again,
 It seems as though the angels stooped
 To catch that soulful strain.

To thee I breathe my inmost thoughts,
 My joys, my hopes, my grief,
 Knowing that in thy sympathy
 My heart will find relief.
 Thou touchest every tender chord
 And raise within my breast
 A yearning for that better land
 Where tired souls may rest.

Again thy passion-laden songs
 Tell of the power of love,
 Of olden days, when stately knights
 Fought for their lady's glove,
 And at the touch of this weak hand
 There quivers through thy frame
 A sound which tells of mighty deeds
 Which men have wrought for fame.

Thou playest on the strings of life,
 And at my will portray
 Its joys, its hopes, its passing fears,
 Each hold their magic sway.
 And as I lay my bow aside,
 'Tis with a purer heart
 I turn once more, with strength renewed,
 To fill life's daily part.



FIRELIGHT FANCIES.

As I sat by the fading firelight,
Alone with the dying year,
Old memories long since laid to rest
Awoke once more within my breast
Memories of friends once dear.

Their shadowy faces one by one
Look forth from the firelight glow,
Some there are, smiling, joyous, glad,
Others are careworn, sad,
As I knew them long ago.

And each brings some half-forgotten scene
To mind, as before my gaze
They come and go, a phantom throng,
Bearing my tired heart along
To those other far-off days.

The days when, a tiny, blue-eyed child,
I stood by my mother's knee,
And heard, with all a child's delight,
Those wondrous tales of New Year's Night
She loved to relate to me.

Though oft have the cruel winter snows
On thy lonely tombstone lain,
To-night I feel thy presence near,
Whispering words of love and cheer
To your weary child again.

And now, 'mid the flickering shadows,
 Another form I can trace,—
 A maid, whose truthful, laughing eyes
 Are cloudless as the summer skies,
 With a fair and flower-like face.

'Tis the shade of my boyhood's sweetheart,
 And I see, as in a dream,
 Those far-off days when, side by side,
 We wandered through the eventide,
 By the winding silvern stream.

And the touch of your hand in mine, dear,
 And your smile, so sad, and bright,
 Bring back, as though 'twere yesterday,
 That summer time, long passed away,
 As I sit alone to-night.

And so, till the peal of the joy-bells
 Has welcomed the new-born year,
 Do shadowy forms and shadowy hands
 Reach out to me from far-off lands,
 Each bringing some memory dear.

Yet my thoughts are not all of sadness.
 As the past recedes again,
 The present has its blessings dear,
 And hope adorns each glad new year,
 Though it brings a touch of pain.

AFTER MANY YEARS.

I FEAR to read thy tender smile,
 To gaze thy tender face upon,
 To meet the glance of those dear eyes,
 Where once Love's brightest message shone,
 Lest time and absence should have changed
 And from mine own thy heart estranged.

I dare not clasp those outstretched hands,
 Or mark the welcome in thy tone.
 Let I should read but friendship there,—
 I who would claim thy love alone.
 If, now the cruel waiting's past,
 We only meet too late at last!

The years of absence may have taught
 Thy tender heart to love anew;
 Yet have I ever dared to hope
 Through time and change to find thee true,
 And lived through all the years of pain,
 Only that we might meet again.

Whether, 'neath Afric's burning skies,
 Or in the frozen northern zone,
 My feet have strayed, the thought of thee
 Has cheered me when my heart was lone.
 No other form, no other face,
 Could in my thoughts usurp thy place.

And now that ten long years have passed,
 We two stand face to face again,
 Are we to greet as strangers greet?
 Has all my suffering been in vain?
 If I had come too late, dear heart,
 'Twere better we remained apart.

ANGEL MUSIC.

I DREAMED that a white-robed angel,
 On whose brow was a halo bright
 Appeared to me in a vision,
 'Mid a cloud of luminous light.
 I gazed and was filled with wonder,
 And I longed with intense desire
 To hear the angel above me
 Touch the strings of his golden lyre.

And the angel read my longing,
 For there rose on the vibrant air
 A song, which filled me with rapture,
 Like the voice of a tender prayer.
 Now hushed like a magic whisper
 Of the zephyry summer breeze,
 That kisses the shimmering grasses,
 And rustles the leaves of the trees.

Again I can hear the moaning
 Of a spirit lost in the night,
 And now 'tis a chant of glory
 Of a soul that has found the light.
 Again 'tis a hymn of battle,
 Such a mighty triumphal song,
 That the heavens seem resounding
 As the chorus is borne along.

But a change stole o'er the music,
 And the harp that the angel bore
 Seemed weeping for human sorrow,
 Till my spirit could bear no more.
 For all the sadness, the pathos,
 That mortal must suffer below,
 Mingled and blended together
 In a heart-broken wail of woe.

And the cloud grew bright and brighter,
 Till it seemed to my dazzled eyes,
 That the heavens themselves had opened,
 And the angel began to arise.
 Then a dark haze closed above me,
 And I knew that my dream was o'er,
 And the strains of heavenly music
 Would gladden my heart no more.



